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AN INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH TO
THE TEXAS CATTLE RANCH

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements

APPROVED:

For the Degree
MASTER OF

by
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Austin, Texas

APPROVED:

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AN INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH TO

THE TEXAS CATTLE RANCH

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas in Partial Fulfillment

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For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Buford Elijah Farris, Jr., B.A.

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PREFACE

The "cowboy," as a figure of boyhood imagination, has been a part of my life for a long time. This interest was similar to that of most small boys. It was a fascination with an ideal hero. This figure continued as a part of my thinking for many years and changed from worship to a desire to understand the forces that created this hero. Also, the fact that I am a Texan was an influence in choosing this study. No person could be in Texas long without feeling the strength of this social background of the cattle country appearing in unexpected ways. Therefore, when this topic was suggested, I saw in it an interesting study from the personal side and a valuable one from the side of knowledge.

When I first looked at the materials involved, I thought I had chosen an impossible task. However, the growing tendency for studies in Texas history made the task of feeling out for data a much easier job. The main problem was one of limiting the materials used to a necessary minimum. It is hoped that the right balance of including the necessary facts and of preventing overlapping has been achieved. The sources for each fact are numerous. The reference to a particular author does not mean that he is the only person who recognized the fact or even the first or most important.

The hardest materials to find were data on the social relations of present-day ranching. Much study is needed in this direction.

A great deal of the material here came from acquaintanceship with ranchers and their community life along with some materials from a few studies. Therefore, the part of the thesis concerned with

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ranching today can be open to the criticism of being incomplete and perhaps not typical of the whole of the ranching system. However, since this study depended primarily upon second-hand source material, it could only use the materials available. It is hoped that it will contribute toward the direction of later and more adequate studies.

The next problem was one of conceptualizing the sociological problems involved in the ranching system. The orientation came from the rising tendency in sociology to conceptualize so-called "subjective," or meaningful, materials. The focus of my attention centered on the problem of "institutions" as presented by Talcott Parsons. It was the similarity of his approach to that of Znaniecki that made me combine the points of view of these two men in the basic theoretical approach of the thesis. Also, concepts of such writers as Sorokin and MacIver were used. No one should think that the lack of reference to such sociologists as Cooley, Durkheim, Sumner, and many others, is an indication of a belief in the unimportance of their work. The problem in this thesis is not to indicate the full background of institutional theory, but it is the application of the developed sociological theory of institutions to a typological study of a particular institutional structure.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	INTRODUCTION	PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION	6
	General	
	Relevant Studies	
	Problems involved	
II.	METHODOLOGY AND THEORY	11
	Methodology	
	Conceptual Scheme	
	Basic Social theory	
III.	THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE EARLY TEXAS CATTLE RANCH	23
	Situational patterns	
	Instrumental patterns	
	Integrative patterns	
	Summation	
IV.	INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE OF THE TEXAS CATTLE RANCH	59
	Technical factors	
	Intra-institutional factors	
	Inter-institutional factors	
	Supra-institutional factors	
	The result	
V.	CONCLUSION	84
	Survivals	
	Solutions to some earlier problems	
	Theoretical implications	

J. Frank Dobie's works are the best examples of a person who combines all these approaches. His books have a good story combined with factual materials. See A Vagabond of the Brush Country and The Longhorns.

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This study of necessity raises the question of the relation to history of sociology as a generalizing science. Historical materials

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General

The Texas cattle ranch has been approached in various ways in attempts to present understandings of all aspects of the ranch. The analysis here brings to bear on the same source material of the ranch the sociological theory of institutions. It is hoped that from this more understanding is gained of ranching and also that some additions or clarifications can be made in the theory of institutions. Neither the materials used nor the theory are new; only their juxtaposition in one study is new. The sources used for the concrete data are of the nature of historical research, biographical material, literary interpretations, and individual accounts of the facts involved. These same materials can be approached on various levels of abstraction. The technician might be only interested in the mechanical part of ranching. The literary person may have only an interest in good fiction material. The naturalist studies the type of plants and animals present. The sociologist is interested in the types of social structure expressed in the institutional patterns.¹ This frame of

¹ J. Frank Dobie's works are the best examples of a person who combines all these approaches. His books have a good story combined with factual materials. See A Vaquero of the Brush Country and The Longhorns.

reference of the sociologists is the basis of the approach of this study. Several comparative studies of the Texas cattle ranch have been

This study of necessity raises the question of the relation to history of sociology as a generalizing science. Historical materials

are used a great deal in this analysis of the cattle ranch, and therefore some might wish to classify it as an historical approach to the ranch. The line of division between sociology and history is not clear. Historical knowledge must also abstract in order to be communicating as part of the culture and history of this section of the American nation, and compares it with the other institutions formed by other social sciences which attempt to understand social data in abstract terms and history, which usually is concerned with the particular, differ mainly in their relative emphasis on one or the other of the two essential and complementary directions of scientific research, so comprehensive. It is concerned only with the cattle ranch as it developed in Texas and as it changed in structure. Webb also raises reality to abstract concepts and from abstract concepts to concrete reality.² Whenever history seeks to interpret its materials in terms of the effect of the frontier on the institutions that came into contact with

it.²

Florian Znaniecki, The Method of Sociology, p. 25

of a generalizing scheme, it shifts from the unique or the particular to the general or universal. The generalizing sciences, such as sociology, must base their theory upon particular and unique data.

This study is historical because it uses historical data, but its approach is in terms of the conceptual framework of institutional structure and social processes represented by sociology. It does not try to add to the existing data on the ranch, but it seeks the causes of institutional patterns and the changes in their structure.

Relevant studies: Frederick J. Turner, The Frontier in American History, F. L. Demobilization and Other Essays, pp. 23-42.

Several comparative studies of the Texas cattle ranch have been made in which the ranch was compared with different types of institutions. W. P. Webb, in The Great Plains, emphasizes the role the cattle

ranch has played in the arid west region.³ He places it within its

3

Walter P. Webb, The Great Plains, pp. 205-255.

setting as part of the culture and history of this section of the American nation, and compares it with the other institutions formed on the Great Plains or, if formed elsewhere, further developed on the Great Plains. His materials furnished much of the material and many of the analytical insights for this study. The analysis here is not so comprehensive. It is concerned only with the cattle ranch as it developed in Texas and as it changed in structure. Webb also raises a problem which is relevant to this analysis, namely, that of the effect of the frontier on the institutions that came into contact with it.

Leyburn has more explicitly placed the ranch in the frontier situation in his comparative study of various frontier institutions.⁴

4

James G. Leyburn, Frontier Folkways, p. 6.

He attempts an explanation of the variations in such institutions.

The frontier hypothesis has been a strong one in American history

with probably Frederick Turner occupying the most well-known position.⁵

Many sociologists, including Sumner and his student and later

5

Frederick J. Turner, The Frontier in American History, F. L. Paxson, The Great Demobilization and Other Essays, pp. 23-42.

The problems toward which this study is intended to direct itself may be more explicitly stated. The first question is just what the

colleague, Keller,⁶ were concerned partly with the frontier and its factors which caused it to emerge and those factors which changed it.

⁶ William G. Sumner and Albert G. Keller, The Science of Society, pp. 63-64, 83, 85.

effects upon group patterns. Leyburn, as a student of Keller, is in this tradition. Some clarification of the effects of the frontier should come from this study of the ranch, since the early ranching patterns emerged on the frontier.

Toynbee has placed the ranch in another comparative situation. He sees the cattle culture of Texas as a frustrated nomadic civilization stopped by the rising industrial revolution.⁷ The usefulness of

⁷ Arnold J. Toynbee, A Study of History, Vol. III, p. 21. Therefore, the emergence of new patterns is especially implied in frontier situations. Also, the problem of interaction between institutional systems either as opposition or cooperation is pertinent in looking at the cattle ranch development along side other frontier patterns of a nomadic culture has been used here by employing concepts of Louis Wallis from his sociological study of the early nomadic life of the Hebrew people.⁸ Toynbee's thesis that the early cattle culture could

⁸ Certain patterns have remained as survivals of the ranch system. Louis Wallis, God and the Social Process, pp. 11-17.

have developed into a full-fledged nomadic civilization is questionable. Some aspects of this problem are discussed after the analysis of the Texas cattle ranch. Culture is of particular importance.

Problems involved

The problems toward which this study is intended to direct itself may be more explicitly stated. The first question is just what the

institutional structure of the ranch was and is, and to indicate the factors which caused it to emerge and those factors which changed its character. The specific question of the effect of the frontier

upon the ranch has been raised, and clearer understanding of this will be one of the goals. Comparison with nomadic societies will prove of value here. Another problem involved in the frontier question is the resulting reintegration with the parent society and the external behavior, but they involve communicated attitudes and interpretations of these attitudes. This seems to be the primary problem of the social sciences. They must in some way deal with what Znaniecki has called the "humanistic coefficient." That is, of all institutions. The whole problem of structure of patterns, deviance, and change are understood clearly when looking at frontier patterns, because they are by definition facing change. Therefore, the emergence of new patterns is especially implied in frontier situations. Also, the problem of interaction between institutional systems either as opposition or cooperation is pertinent in looking at the cattle ranch development along side other frontier patterns or with the parent society.

Aside from the specific question of frontier and nomadic institutions is the relevancy of this study to a systematic interpretation of all institutions. The whole problem of structure of patterns, deviance, and change are understood clearly when looking at frontier patterns, because they are by definition facing change. Therefore, the emergence of new patterns is especially implied in frontier situations. Also, the problem of interaction between institutional systems either as opposition or cooperation is pertinent in looking at the cattle ranch development along side other frontier patterns or with the parent society. Certain patterns have remained as survivals of the ranch system.

These have usually taken on very different functions from the original patterns. The function that these patterns perform in modern life is an important problem for this study. Also, the strength of these patterns in an urban culture is of particular importance.

Essentially the method of the social scientist is to reconstruct these patterns in an urban culture is of particular importance. They define the meaningful experience of others. The technique used in language is a good example of the procedure. The basic process is that of putting oneself in the place of the other person. This is necessary in language for understanding what a particular work means

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY AND THEORY

Methodology

The general materials used in this thesis are of the form of historical data drawn from personal documents and recorded experiences of many people. The facts used are not those of strictly external behavior, but they involve communicated attitudes and interpretations of these attitudes. This seems to be the primary problem of the social sciences. They must in some way deal with what Znaniecki has called the "humanistic coefficient."¹ That is,

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Florian Znaniecki, The Method of Sociology, p. 37.

the social scientist does not deal with objects or behavior by themselves, but he must analyse in terms of the meanings conveyed by the objects or behavior and the attitudes toward these meanings. Znaniecki puts it in this manner.

Such data, as objects of the students theoretic reflection, already belong to somebody else's active experience and are such as this active experience makes them.²

2

Ibid., p. 37.

Essentially the method of the social scientist is to reconstruct and define the meaningful experience of others. The technique used in language is a good example of the procedure. The basic process is that of putting oneself in the place of the other person. This is necessary in language for understanding what a particular work means

to the talker and, therefore, for understanding what he means to say. This same basic process is used in the social sciences. The researcher must interpret the behavior in terms of its meaning to the individual involved. It can be seen that this opens the researcher to very serious charges. Some say that he cannot handle data that is capable of being demonstrated or repeated. This is only overcome if the reactions are verbal or if the behavior has been recorded in sufficient detail and accuracy. Most of the ranch data is derived from personal recollections. Sufficient community of agreement is necessary to confirm the validity of these data as facts. There always remains the possibility that further experiences or reading will cast doubt on the present facts. The scientist is not interested in the facts as such, but only as they pertain to some conceptual scheme. He must analyse from reality. He approaches his data with a specific interest in mind. The solution of problems he raises are in terms of the frame of reference which he uses.

The same concrete data can be handled within several conceptual schemes which yield prediction and control in different situations. The ideal of analytical schemes is that presented by a series of algebraic equations in which the variables can quantitatively be expressed as functions of the other variables. However, on the social and cultural level, the complexity of the systems has defied attempts that they are left out of the other or are considered constant. Therefore, conceptual schemes are only comparable if they deal with the same problems. A judgment between two theories has to be made on the basis of the broadness of the solution. Theory A would be better than theory B if it solved the same problems as B plus problems which are residual to theory B. If they did not refer to the same problems, no

Comparison would be possible unless a third theory could solve the problems of both within its scope.

From this, the method used here is a variant of the participant-observer methodology in which it is necessary to use methods of "understanding" to get at socially significant experience.³

³See the following for longer discussions of the implications of such a methodology. Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action; Znaniecki, op. cit., Chap. I and XIX; Pitirim Sorokin, Social and Cultural Dynamics, Vol. IV, Chap. I-IV.

It is necessary to participate in the activity in some way. Direct participation is the best method, but for historical materials reconstruction of the situation symbolically through language is the only adequate method. However, either way, some measure of experiencing the attitudes of the original participants is necessary. The data gained through participation then must be categorized and universalized in terms of the observer's conceptual scheme.

Conceptual scheme

The ideal of analytical schemes in that presented by a series of algebraic equations in which the variables can quantitatively be expressed as functions of the other variables. However, on the social and cultural level, the complexity of the systems has defied attempts at such analysis. A more practical scheme has been one that is similar to the biological scheme of structure and function. In such a scheme variables are related to a structure of assumed stable needs and patterns. The maintenance of this structure in a given environment is the criterion for attributing meaning to the processes that

enter into the system. The basic unit of such a structure for a social system is an "actor," who tries to attain goals, reacts emotionally toward situations, and to some extent understands his situation, his goals and himself.⁴ A social system is made up of inter-acting actors

⁴ Talcott Parsons, Essays in Sociological Theory Pure and Applied, p. 32.

in situations which are in part shared in common. It is the maintenance of the actors identity as biological organisms, particular persons, and as participants in social groups which determines the functional significance of the institutional patterns. Primarily a threefold division is used in presenting the institutional structure of the early phase of Texas cattle ranching. This structure is divided into situational patterns, instrumental patterns, and integrative patterns.⁵ Each of these divisions corresponds to

⁵ Ibid, pp. 35-36, 44-51.

certain foci of functional needs around which the patterns emerge. The criterion of the division centers mainly about the relation of the different foci to the explicit goals shared by the participants of the social system.⁶

⁶ This criterion is very similar to Odum's divisions of folkways, technicways, and stateways. His folkways include more than is taken in by situational patterns here. Also his stateways include less than integrative patterns do here. Howard W. Odum, Understanding Society, pp. 225-231.

among such patterns are those of occupational roles, patterns of exchange, patterns of property, and patterns of technical authority.

These Situational patterns emerge around functional needs which human beings necessarily meet no matter what the explicit goals of their actions are. Every person belongs to a certain sex and has certain biological relations to others. He also must live in a particular location and therefore be a member of a territorial group. Besides these obvious situations which people must undergo, there are other experiences which create situational patterns. These are patterns in which the focus is the individuality of the interacting persons. Informal social organizations, in their different types, such as friendship, spontaneous leadership or casual personal dependency, are usually formed. They may be instrumental or integrative from the standpoint of the individual, but from the frame of reference of this study's conceptual scheme they emerge around functional needs external to the explicit goals of the social system and therefore these patterns are not directly instrumental to or integrative of these specific goals. Situational patterns usually grow spontaneously, without any premeditated plan. They result from fortuitous interactions created by varying types of geographical, biological, psychological, or social conditions.⁷

⁷ Sorokin's discussion of why and how groups originate gives a more complete presentation of problems involved here. Pitirim A. Sorokin, Society, Culture, and Personality, pp. 368-371.

Instrumental patterns emerge around the functional roles necessary to the realization of the specific goals of the social system being studied. They indicate the level of the division of labor. Common among such patterns are those of occupational roles, patterns of exchange, patterns of property, and patterns of technical authority.

These patterns emerge more because of intention or purpose on the part of the members of the group. Therefore, they are usually more rational than situational patterns. The explicit goals of the Texas cattle industry were the raising and marketing of cattle. It is the patterns that directly emerged around these two goals that form the instrumental patterns of Texas cattle ranching.

Integrative patterns emerge around the functional need of the social system to lessen the possible conflict and confusion of the status and roles of the participants. These patterns make possible the fulfillment of the roles as defined by the first two groups of patterns. The explicit goals of the social system, the norms and values instrumental to such goals, and also the norms and values which have emerged around needs external to the explicit goals of the social system, must be integrated together and with the values of the larger society. The conflicting definitions of authority and power must be coordinated. The different ideas of what are the desired traits of an individual must be organized. Around these needs of the social system, integrative patterns form. Common integrative patterns are patterns which give the social system a basic value-orientation, patterns which give monopoly on the use of force into certain legitimate hands, and patterns of stratification which indicate the relative desirability and undesirability of different characteristics of individuals. In the ranch system conflicts of power arose due to deep-seated situational patterns which encouraged rustling. It is around such foci that the integrative patterns of the early Texas cattle ranch developed.

In conceptualizing the change from the early phase of Texas cattle ranching, several different concepts are used. Three types of phenomena are noted in this change; distributive, collective and conjunctural.⁸ The first, distributive phenomena, are the aggregates of

⁸Robert M. MacIver, Social Causation, p. 304.

many individual actions. The individuals do not act as a group toward a specified goal but each acts toward his individual goals. However, the individuals do the same thing. This type of phenomenon is usually presented in terms of rate or frequencies which indicate how many people in a given population have acted alike in a certain action. In this analysis of ranching, statistics are not used and therefore the volume of any particular distributive phenomenon is not presented. The importance of this type of phenomenon in this analysis of the ranch is in the recognition of the importance of individuals evaluating the situation as individuals and then acting alone. It gives a clearer presentation of the growth of the strength of a particular pattern through a greater number of individuals evaluating the situation similarly.

Collective phenomena are presented more explicitly. They express the agreement of several individuals in the evaluation of the situation and then their taking concerted action to bring about a common goal. Legal enactments and formal organizations are common types of such phenomena. In the change of the institutional patterns of ranching, this type of phenomenon was very important. It indicates a conscious recognition of the changes that need to be made and an organized attempt to make such changes.

Conjectural phenomena are the result of unpurposed action.

They may be due to uncalculated changes which cause the final result to differ widely from the plan in mind, or they may have no connection with a preconceived design at all be be the result of the total body of activity of the group. This type of phenomenon is also very important in the study of the change of ranching patterns. There were many unplanned results which emerged in the changing evaluations of the individuals involved in the ranching system. The whole general direction of the change of the institutional patterns was a conjunctural phenomenon.⁹

⁹For good discussions of conjunctural phenomena see Robert K. Merton, "The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action," American Sociological Review, I, pp. 894-904, and Sorokin, op. cit., pp. 79-85, 371-376, 460-461.

The change of ranching is discussed under three different headings. They are intra-institutional factors, inter-institutional factors, and supra-institutional factors. The first, intra-institutional factors, are primarily discussed as rationalization and secularization. The changes from the older institutional structure in the process of rationalization took the form of organizing the ranch on a basis of efficiency and economy. This also involved secularization in that many of the important values placed on certain activities were removed because of their interference with the rising rational attitude. These changes were internal to the ranching system and were due to the attempt of the members to make more secure their ideal and material interests which were threatened by the tremendous growth of ranching itself plus the competition with newer institutions.

In the analysis of inter-institutional factors the processes of acculturation and accommodation are important. In acculturation, the members of the ranch system borrowed from the various groups which surrounded the cattlemen and were gradually encroaching upon the cattle country. Also between these groups and the cattlemen oppositions arose which were solved by accommodative patterns. These patterns tended to put the different groups upon a common basis of agreement.

In the analysis of supra-institutional factors, the fact that the ranch system functioned within a supra-system in which its norms had to find legitimate orientation is the important consideration. Assimilation is the important process here. Of course, assimilation is the end process in a series of accommodations which all tend toward the sub-system's values becoming identical with those of the supra-system. The Texas cattle ranch had to become a legal institution within the statutes of the United States and Texas. Political organizations and legal battles are the main types of actions involved. The ranch had to fight the attempt of other groups to keep it an outlaw institution.

Basic social theory

This conceptualization is related to a more basic social theory. It draws from the theory most explicitly set forth by Znaniecki¹⁰ and

10

See Znaniecki, op. cit.; also Florian Znaniecki, Social Actions, esp., pp. 1-34.

11

more recently by Parsons in their stress on action as being the

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See Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action.

basic social category. Znaniecki puts this forth in this statement.

It is human activity which has constructed the system by selecting its elements and combining them together to the exclusion of disturbing factors; it is human activity of a similar kind which actualizes the system again and again in a certain field of human experience and prevents it from being different each time it appears.¹²

12

Florian Znaniecki, The Method of Sociology p. 43.

The cultural system must be constructed and maintained by human activity. Structurally, a minimum unit act consist of a future desired state of affairs, or an end, aspects of the situation over which the actor has no control, or conditions, aspects of the situation which can be utilized to bring about the end, or means, and some mode of relationship between the means and end, or norms.¹³ The action system

13

Parsons, op. cit., p. 44.

involves attitudes toward values and is inherently normative.

As process, action is, in fact, the process of the alteration of the conditional elements in the direction of conformity with norms---- Conditions may be conceived at one pole, ends and normative rules, at the other, means and effort as the connecting link between them.¹⁴

14

Ibid, p. 732.

It is the normative aspect of action which gives it its so-called "subjective" nature. Since an ideal refers to a desired future state of affairs, it can only exist in the minds of the actors.

This frame of reference of action provides a common system of theory for the social sciences and the study of cultural systems. It corresponds very well with what Sorokin means by a meaningful causal system.

Any empirical sociocultural phenomenon consists of three components: (1) immaterial, spaceless, and timeless meanings; (2) material (physiochemical and biological) vehicles that materialize, externalize, or objectify the meanings; and (3) human agents that bear, use, and operate the meanings with the help of the material vehicles.¹⁵

15

Pitirim A. Sorokin, Social and Cultural Dynamics, Vol. IV., p. 45.

The specific interest of Sociology, besides the general theory of action which it shares with the other social sciences, is that of social systems. As the term social science indicates, in a broad sense all conduct is social in that it is the outcome of the planned or unplanned inculcation of social meanings by other human beings.

However, those actions which are more or less specifically directed toward other persons can be distinguished from those actions which are social only in a derived and secondary sense, such as aesthetics, technology, and similar systems. Action in Social Systems involves

16

Cf. Znaniecki, op. cit. p. 131. Also, Parsons, op. cit. p. 762.

one individual or a group as the "object" whom the action is meant to influence. These actions have norms which relate two or more individuals, or two or more groups, or an individual and a group, to each other as "partners" and define each other as objects with regard to whom certain duties have to be fulfilled and from whom fulfillment of other duties is expected. From this, one can see that a group is

CHAPTER III

composed fundamentally of persons, each of whom is a value for all the rest, the object of collective assistance and control, and all of whom cooperate in supporting the group as their common value. Social systems are delineated by the fact that the action is determinably and intentionally¹⁷ directed to another actor or other actors.

¹⁷ With regard to an objective abstraction of the actor's other-regarding values or ends, whether or not the actor is fully conscious of the function carried out.

The main problem involved in sociology is an understanding of the factors involved in the integration of these social values and behavior. Institutional patterns are those patterns which do this defining of the value of an individual or group by assigning and integrating status and role patterns.¹⁸ Therefore, it is these aspects

¹⁸ Cf. Parsons, op. cit. Chap. XIX. for definition of institutions and also discussion of place of sociology.

of the ranch system that will be indicated by the application of the conceptual scheme presented above to the concrete data of the Texas cattle ranch. The ranch is viewed from the frame of reference of being an institutional system, that is, a system of reciprocally interacting persons acting within roles which carry status within some common value scheme.

which formed the core of the institutional system of the early Texas cattle ranch.

CHAPTER III

Situational patterns

One of the THE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE OF the ranch system was the land. Around THE EARLY TEXAS CATTLE RANCH

The primary functions around which the institutional structure of the ranch was built were the raising and marketing of cattle. Such were the manifest functions of the ranching institution. Around them, growing out of situations which were inescapable, were structures which gave to the early Texas cattle ranch its distinctive character that it has in history. It occupied in the institutional economy of the plains country a similar position to that which a family occupies in a familistic society. That is, it was complete and self-satisfying in itself. All of an individual's statuses and roles were found within the framework of the ranch's life. Its history, after this early phase, was one of losing many of these unique patterns because of the loss of many of its functions. Webb defines the ranch thus:

The unit of production in this area was the ranch, which term is used to include the houses and all the range of the cattle, whether fenced or unfenced. The practice of raising cattle on a large scale is ranching, and the owner of a ranch is a ranchman or cattleman. The cowboy is an employee whose business it is to handle cattle.¹

¹Walter P. Webb, The Great Plains, p. 228.

It was this unit of production and practice of raising cattle which formed the core of the institutional system of the early Texas cattle ranch.

Situational patterns

One of the most prominent conditions facing the ranch system was the land. Around the necessity of locating various activities on the range, there emerge several situational patterns. A ranchman in considering his ranch site and plans concerned himself primarily with grass and water.² The headquarters camp was set on the bank of some

² Ibid, p. 228.

stream. In the semi-arid climate of the cattle country, water was the most important item. Control of the water meant control of the land surrounding it. Therefore, the bank of the stream was the logical center of activity. From this center of activity, the cowhands spread over the wide range which included as much land as the cattle of the particular ranch could roam over. The outermost line of activity on the larger ranches were the riding places of the lineriders, who were often stationed in pairs in dugouts. The loneliness of such places is evident. If one considers that the season of most work for the linerider was during northers or blizzards when the cattle drifted toward the south, then the hardness of this kind of work becomes even greater.³ Also this outside line was exposed to attacks by Indians

³ William C. Holden, Alkali Trails, p. 44.

and rustlers.

In between this extreme line and the headquarters, the wagon outfit traveled doing the regular cow-work.⁴ The wagon outfit generally

⁴Webb, op. cit., p. 251.

lived in the open from about the middle of April to about the first of December. During the winter the outfit was scattered over the different ranch camps, which varied in their furnishings. The working outfits of necessity maintained close associations with the cowhands.

The land of the cattle country also affected the norms of the Texas cattle ranch in other ways. It had symbolic value to the cowboys and in many ways provided an object with which he identified himself. In general the Texas cattle country affected the men coming upon it much like the sea does the sailor.⁵ The monotonous tone of

⁵Ibid., p. 487.

the rolling prairies or the continuous underbrush of the brush country gave a feeling of elation and awe to those who knew it. They saw in it security. Dobie quotes one old vaquero who speaks of the brush country of South Texas:

The monte has been my mother. The monte has been my school. All I know I have learned from the monte.⁶

⁶J. Frank Dobie, The Longhorns, p. 293

These types of patterns performed the function of representing symbolically the cow customs to the cowhand. The land because of its abundance did not have too much economic value. However, the distinctive characteristics of the range country gave the members of the ranch system feelings of pride.⁷

⁷ For good discussion of such uses of land see Walter Firey, Land Use in Central Boston, pp. 47-197.

One of the most prominent features of the Texas cattle frontier was a sparse population.⁸ This gave the early frontiersman, and the

⁸ Natalie Cutis, "A Western Reverie," The Nation, CXI., 591-592.

later cowhand, a solitude which necessarily characterized life outside of the traditions of a settled community. Deviants from the larger society could find refuge in the large sparsely settled land and remain "lost".⁹ The "cowboy," as a specific social personality, was

⁹ Douglas Branch, The Cowboy and His Interpreters, p. 94.

shaped a great deal by this solitude. During some of the jobs, such as in the winter camps or on "line riding," he saw few people. "Lone riding" and living for oneself became normal with him. His contacts were mostly with the men of his ranch and those he worked with.

Sparse population also meant a hard life. The dangers of Indian raids were part of the cowhand's life until well into the development of the ranch.¹⁰ This type of danger put a premium on this work for

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 95.

the youth of the nation. Strength and courage were required characteristics.¹¹ Courage was often symbolized by each cowcamp proving new

¹¹ W.M. Raine and W.C. Barnes, Cattle, p. 9.

members before entirely accepting them. This emphasis on courage made youth, if not in age, at least in viewpoint and in ability to measure up to the requirements of the hard life, a positive value.

The expectation of excitement was a large drawing power for the cattle country. This points up the fact that women were generally absent and, without them, the institutions of the family, the church, the school, and others of a more settled life, were absent too. One woman is credited with having written.

Texas is a good country for men and dogs, but an awfully hard place for oxen and women.¹²

12

E.E. Dale, Cattle Country, p. 22.

This is not to say that women were entirely absent. Ranch owners usually had their wives. Also in the eastern part of the state, where the open range was closed early, small ranch owners with their families were more common. However, the general situation shaping the lives of most cowhands was an all-male society. One range rider recorded that he did not see a woman for nine months.¹³ This led to both a setting

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Ibid, p. 218.

up of women on a pedestal and a degrading in the minds of the men of those women whom they met in the towns at the end of the trail. The absence of binding family ties made life more individualistic. The individual was the standard, and poise and self-sufficiency were the normative pattern. This does not imply lack of social control. The loyalty of the cowhand was something of an ideal of that which was expected of him in his male society.

The lack of emphasis on kinship ties and the absence of any primary group such as the family accentuated the importance of the situational patterns that developed around the individuality of the members. These were informal patterns similar to those that grow up in various work groups and in fortuitous interactions.¹⁴ As has been

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Pitirim Sorokin, Society, Culture, and Personality, pp. 79-82.

pointed out, these are included under situational patterns, because they are not directly instrumental to or integrative of the specific and explicit goals of the cattle ranch, which were the raising and marketing of cattle. They were, however, patterns which were created by inescapable situations that necessarily went with the type of ranching in Texas in the first three quarters of the nineteenth century. On the range, the cowhand of necessity had to interact intimately with his line-camp mates or working partners. He lived with them much more than most modern husbands live with their wives. Some type of patterned expectation had to arise from their interaction on this personal level. These were patterns of friendship and informal leadership.

The informal leadership can be illustrated by Ewen Cameron, often called the "first cowboy."¹⁵ He and his men were of the early

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F. Bechdolt, Tales of the Old-Timers, pp. 185-214.

groups that went after and rounded up the wild cattle of Texas before and after the revolution in 1836. They set a stamp on the ranching institution. It was said of Ewen Cameron:

But what may help you best to see him is the love his men had for him. He had led them so boldly against both Mexicans and Indians that as they were wont to put it, they would have followed him into the depths of hell.¹⁶

16

Ibid, pp. 187-188.

He was not an expert nor an office-holder, but he was a "natural" leader. The groups referred to formed themselves into small companies collecting the wild cattle who had descended from those left behind by the Spanish and Mexicans in their retreats. These companies operated out of east Texas and shipped the cattle to Natchitoches and New Orleans and gave to Texas ranching a cast of what Weber calls adventure capitalism.¹⁷ This type of leadership continued until the close

17

D. C. McArthur, The Cattle Industry of Texas, 1685-1918, p. 49., Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, p. 362.

of the open range phase of ranch history and help to make cattle rustling a "legitimate" occupation.

The Texas cowboy received a great many lessons from his Mexican predecessor in the methods of handling cattle.¹⁸ However, the Ameri-

18

Paul I. Wellman, The Trampling Herd, p. 99.

can did not take over the feudal bond between serf and lord that prevailed between the peon and his master, and still prevails in Latin-American countries where ranching continues.¹⁹ The Texas connection

19

Carl C. Taylor, "Rural Locality Groups In Argentina," American Sociological Review, IX, pp. 162-170

was "feudal" in character, but the bond was more like an order of knights than the lord-serf relation. The Texas cattle ranch "outfit" was more a voluntary fraternity. This fraternity had to remain unshaken by petty jealousies and quarrels. If an outfit did let such animosities arise, it was considered an unfavorable working unit.²⁰

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Branch, op. cit., p. 157.

A cowboy transferred from such a group might have to wait months before his new fellows would be ready to accept him. As late as 1895, the welfare of the cattle ranches depended upon the loyalty of the men hired. This bond was not broken until the big outfits and syndicates took over.²¹

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Raine and Barnes, op. cit., pp. 239.

In general, this feeling of friendship and loyalty carried over to the cattle country as a whole. The rarefied society, in which there was little social interaction, made any opportunity for communication seem very important. The cowhands and ranchowners felt a common bond with men of their kind. Their sharing of a hard life produced a "communistic" attitude toward property, such as food. If the owner was away from his home, there was no reason why a hungry man should not feed himself. This man, however, felt himself duty-bound only to take what he needed. Through most of this early part of ranch history, all goods were safe from theft except cattle.²²

22

Jules V. Allen, Cowboy Lore, p. 23.

The cattle rustler himself would invite a person into his own camp.

Will James says of one such rustler:

It wouldn't matter if your pack horse was loaded with gold nuggets they were just as safe in his bunk house, or maybe safer, than in the safety vault. His specialty was cattle.²³

²³Will James, "Cattle Rustlers," Scribner Magazine, LXXIV, p. 189.

For the cow country as a whole it has been expressed like this:

For all its magnificent distances, the cow country people remained a community, and men didn't think it sporting to steal a cake of food, for example, because it might come perilously close to murder.²⁴

²⁴C.T. Crowell, "The Real Cowboy is Not the Cowboy of Modern Art," Literary Digest, XCI, p. 57.

Looking at the situational patterns as a whole, a few basic points stand out. There were no kinship patterns of relatedness through descent that played very much importance. Since the society was almost all male, the norms were directed toward male activities and emphasized courage and self-reliance. There was also an emphasis upon youth. Patterns of solidarity of necessity centered around the work groups, because, besides being work groups, they were camp groups, chuck-wagon groups, and bunkhouse groups. The distances of the range isolated these groups from interaction with others. The same men ate, slept, fought and worked together. In these work groups there formed a "fraternal" society similar to warrior communities of the past, such as the Ligurian pirates, or the Spartan groups, or the knightly orders.²⁵

²⁵Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, p. 258.

Its biggest resemblance was to that of the sailors who worked on a
 continual frontier. This ranch society was split off from family,

See John A. and Alan Lomax, Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads, Introduction, for similarities in songs.

marriage, and settled life. The link that was significant was that of man and man or comrades. The term "gang" might apply, but the term employed here is the one the cattle men themselves used. This is the outfit. The outfit of course included the other instrumental and integrative patterns, but the situational patterns of informal social organization dominated the norms of the outfit until its change in the last of the nineteenth century.

The cowhand also felt a community spirit with all who shared his life and he expressed this in his free feeling toward property. He even carried this so far as to have a feeling of awe and elation toward the surrounding environment which created this hard life. To him the open range was a symbol of freedom and courage. His identification with the cattle country and community was deep, and it helped him to feel at home in his frontier world.

Instrumental patterns

The manifest functions of the cattle ranch were the raising of cattle and their marketing. Undoubtedly these were its only legitimate utilities in the eyes of the American community as a whole at this time. However, along with the common frontier patterns mentioned above, there were some normative patterns that emerged in attempting to carry out the specific goals of cattle rearing and selling.

The longhorn cattle and horses were the essential instruments around which the institution revolved. Webb has rightly pointed out that it was where the American started using the horse to work the cattle, that ranching in Texas began.²⁷ This was in Nueces County. There Mexican cattle began to be handled by mounted Texans armed

²⁷ Webb, op. cit., p. 215.

with rope and six-shooters. They were the first Cowboys. They learned their trade from the Vaquero, but their adventure capitalism as noted above, was quite different from the Mexican or Spanish type. This horsemanship affected the norms of Texas ranching a great deal. The pride of the cowhand in his ability on horseback is evident in his custom of wearing cowboy boots at all times even if they were uncomfortable.²⁸ They expressed his ethnic pride, as did his wearing of

²⁸ Holden, op. cit., p. 20.

spurs. These might have been necessary implements when upon a horse but they came to be social requirements when off its back.²⁹ Great

²⁹ R.F. Adams, Cowboy Lingo, p. 3.

value was put also upon the horses themselves. The principal topic of conversation of the cowboys around the campfire was of their horses and often in imagination they would trade horses, run imaginary races, or just talk about their pet ponies.³⁰

³⁰ Webb, op. cit., p. 252.

The horsemanship of the cowhand made him something of a modern centaur. He lived in his saddle. Even for short distances he preferred to catch and saddle his horse rather than walk. This life

³¹The pioneer cattleman, when entering a virgin district, mentally dismissed everything that was not of his own making.
Raine and Barnes, op. cit., p. 97.

on horseback gave the cowhand an aristocratic feeling. He disliked all types of work that had to be done off horseback. The cowhand's saddle was a status symbol and work-bench as well as his throne. "He sold his saddle" was the typical expression for being broke.

³²R.F. Adams, op. cit., p. 6.

The skill of roping went along with horsemanship. It took a great deal of training to become proficient at this art. The value of horsemanship and its related patterns is expressed in the old saying of the range, "A cowboy is a man with guts and a horse."

³³R.F. Adams, op. cit., p. 198.

The early phase of ranching has often been classified as the era of the "open range." Around the pattern of unfenced land there emerged several unique patterns. "Range rights" were one type of such pattern. These were a man's right to his range in consequence of priority of occupation and continuous possession. Actually, he

³⁴Ibid, p. 3.
The brand came from the owner of the horse from some phase of his life. Respect for the other man's brand was a part of the code of the cattleman, though it was never as deep as the situational patterns

water rights.³⁵ Since water was scattered, this kept the ranches scat-

³⁵C.C. Rister, Southern Plainsmen, p. 122.

tered. The pioneer cattleman, when entering a virgin district, mentally claimed everything in sight and beyond. If a second one appeared, the two would divide the district and each would keep on his side of an agreed-upon dividing line. It is out of this sort of division that "range rights" developed.³⁶ These "range rights" then usually

³⁶James K. Greer, Bois d'Arc to Barb'd Wire, p. 382.

meant the water a man used and the surrounding range on which his cattle were supposed to graze. This particular pattern was undoubtedly the most unstable of the instrumental patterns. Its basis depended upon free land, scarce water, and sparse population. As will be pointed out later, these three factors were quick to change when impediments to advancement from the east were removed.

Land ownership was a factor of small importance on the early Texas range. There then emerged, or to be more accurate, there was borrowed from the Spanish, the only kind of indication of ownership possible.³⁷

³⁷Holden, op. cit., p. 118.

This was the marking of the cattle or branding. The brand of an outfit became something that indicated distinctiveness and originality. The brand came from the owner's name or maybe from some phase of his life. Respect for the other man's brand became a part of the code of the cattleman, though it was never as deep as the situational patterns

mentioned. Later, when the range was more legal, these brands were registered at the county courthouse. Good cowhands prided themselves on the number of brands they knew and the stories behind them. The brand reminds one of the coat of arms of feudalism. Like the coat of arms of a knight, the brand was often put on the saddles, chuck wagon, articles of furniture in the ranch house, or almost anything handy. The brand graphically presented the outfit in a form which could easily be portrayed and which could call out pride.

With an open range and the pattern of branding, another pattern is almost inevitable. This was the round-up. It is said that this pattern came from the Cumberland country where the thin population had for some time permitted the cattle to run at large and then collected them at the full of each spring in a round-up.³⁸ The knowledge of this

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Branch, op. cit., p. 51.

undoubtedly came in with the immigrants from that section of the country. In Texas there was a primitive forerunner of the round-up in the gathering together of a few neighboring stockmen to look over each other's herd for stray animals.³⁹

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Adams, op. cit., p. 1.

As the range developed, however, the herds increased and the possibilities of mixups became greater and more common. Therefore, it was necessary for the cattlemen to adopt cooperative plans to work through each other's ranges and sort out the cattle that belonged to each. The early round-ups usually ended with each ranchman's cowboys

driving his cattle back to the home range. However, with further range development, there came to be round-ups arranged by districts. Later, when cattle associations became important, the round-up was systematized to a much higher degree.⁴⁰ There were usually two round-ups, one in

⁴⁰ Branch, op. cit., p. 54.

the spring, and one in the fall. The spring round-up was the most important since it was then that the calves were born and the practice was based on the assumption that the calf followed its mother.⁴¹ This

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 58.

is the way that ownership was revealed. The calves then were branded around a common fire. Each ranch supplied a small outfit. A round-up foreman was chosen. The ranch owners, as well as cowboys, were under his orders.⁴²

⁴² Carl C. Rister, The Southwestern Frontier 1865-1881, p. 286.

Several norms of behavior grew up around the round-up. Ranchers were usually very careful to see that cattle belonging to cowmen even not present were returned to them.⁴³ Also, the code of honor that

⁴³ Ibid., p. 286.

revolved around the branding and deciding of ownership was very effective and worked with very little conflict. One can see the many chances for cheating. However, the sense of obligation was strong

toward a course of equity in the branding whether one was handling cattle of a small or of a large stockowner. ⁴⁴ The single criterion

⁴⁴ Branch, op. cit., p. 67.

stated above of the calf following its mother was strictly followed in determining ownership. This was important in the spring round-up, which was the calf round-up. The fall round-up, or beef round-up, was of less importance. Its purpose was that of gathering the cattle for shipment to market; also, the branding of late calves or those overlooked in the spring. ⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Adams, op. cit. p. 2.

Another pattern developing out of the open range was what was called "line-riding." This was developed on the larger ranches. The ranchowner usually stationed cowboys in groups of two about twenty miles apart in camps along the boundaries of the ranch. ⁴⁶ Their func-

⁴⁶ Rupert N. Richardson and Carl C. Rister, The Greater Southwest p. 341.

tion was to turn back stray cattle from the home range, follow and track down their own strays which were missed, watch out for rustlers, and the general job of protecting the range rights of the boss. They were employed to look after the employer's interest. Lomax quotes an old timer, Billie Fox, who gives a graphic picture of life while line riding:

Singing was company to us just as it was to the cattle. One time when I was line-riding, I met a puncher from another range. We stopped down under some shade trees next to a spring and exchanged songs. Each taught the other the tunes, and then each wrote down the words for the other to learn.⁴⁷

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Lomax, op. cit., Introduction, p. XVI.

Oftentimes cattlemen combined on these line camps to keep cattle from drifting during severe northers and blizzards. Each patrol from each camp would set out at daylight and ride until it met the patrol from the next camp, and then each would ride back to its respective camp.⁴⁸ All cattle encountered belonging to the cooperating owners

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Holden, op. cit., p. 44.

were kept back north of the line. This is another case of cooperation and help among the ranchers. Line riding was one of the first patterns to be replaced by barbed wire. Associations of cattlemen later built drift fences to take the place of line riders.⁴⁹

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Ibid., p. 44.

Another group of patterns emerging out of the specific ends of ranching was the one that grew up around the need of a market for Texas cattle. The chief problem before the Civil War was this one of a market. Various drives were made early, but 1866 marks the main beginning of the northern drives and the bringing into this early phase of ranching a pattern that would stamp it. "The Trail" was almost synonymous with the romantic phase of cattle ranching.⁵⁰ All the

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Richardson and Rister, op. cit., p. 340.

factors and patterns of this phase are seen in their most typical form in the structure of the system around trail driving. Trail driving was one of the main factors to keep Texas ranching from having the lord-serf relation which was prevalent in the times of the Mexican vaquero. The vaquero, in his traditions which tied him to the land and to his lord, was not acculturated to a life where the drive might be as long as fifteen hundred miles from home.⁵¹ The beginning of these

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Branch, op. cit., p. 6.

drives almost replaced the Mexicans by Americans.

The Trail was the driving of the cattle from Texas to the railroad stations and markets in the North. The shortage of beef in the North and the great surplus in the Southwest created the drives which brought this southern beef to the northern market.⁵² Persistent prob-

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Holden, op. cit., p. 24.

lems attended the driving, such as establishing permanent relations with the buyers, and coping with Indians and thieves.⁵³ The latter

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J. W. Anderson, From The Plains To The Pulpit, p. 219.

Branch, op. cit., p. 31.

were either avoided, beaten or killed. The herds on the trail were as big as one thousand to three thousand. There were even as many as five thousand cattle in a single herd.⁵⁴ It was the handling of such

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Lomax, op. cit., Introduction, p. XV.

herds which formed the core of the social pattern of the trail. The status of the men could be determined by their position around the herd. At the head of the herd on the sides, were the "pointers,"

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Richardson and Rister, op. cit., p. 342.

who directed the course of the cattle. They were men who were considered "top hands" among the men. Next, where the herd was wider, there was a man on each side who was called a "flank man." Bringing up the "drag" were the slower-moving animals who were managed by the "greenhorns" or "tenderfeet" cowboys. These men were in the course of time advanced in their work and therefore, in proportion to their rights, they rode the "flank" or "point" positions. The cook with the chuck-wagon came up next.

The cook held a unique position on the trail, at the round-up, or at home. The chuck-wagon was his royal chamber. He was an aristocrat there. The necessity of his office kept him above the joking and play of the others. Often, if some hand made an insulting remark which brought discredit to the cook's profession or in some way interfered with the stability of the kitchen, the rest of the outfit would avenge the cook by some means such as "chapping."

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"Chapping" was the com-

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Branch, op. cit., p. 31.

mon sanction used of laying on the leather, in the form of belts or even chaps, at the proper place on the body. Often, the offender's own chaps were used.

The "boss," or foreman, circled the herd and saw over everything.
He mapped out the trail and chose the camp site and bed grounds.

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Webb, op. cit., p. 264.

The boss was often the owner, but with greater division of labor, it was often a "strawboss," or a middleman, whose reputation was known and who was trusted with the cattle. The character of such men can be

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Branch, op. cit., p. 71.

seen in their business deals. Often they borrowed money only on the simple promise to pay. Loss on such loans was practically unknown.

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McArthur, op. cit., p. 188.

Trail driving became an art after it was once started. The techniques of knowing how to manage "critters" under care, ability to tame long-horns and make them "trailbroke," the power to sing to the cattle at night and soothe them, the skill of controlling a stampede by getting the leaders of a fleeing herd to run into a circle until they were "milling," were parts of this art. This made the trail a school for

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Holden, op. cit., p. 37.

cowhands. They did not consider themselves "pokes" unless they had received this course in the curriculum of ranching art. A cowhand could not qualify as a "top hand" until after the experiences of such

terms emerged more or less unconscious.

a drive.⁶¹ He was in a way a changed man after attempting and solving

⁶¹ Dale, op. cit., p. 62.

the problems of a trail herd. The trail herd typified in its patterns the life of the early Texas ranch or outfit.

Another factor of trail-driving was the towns at the end of the drive. They were the meeting places of the cowboy and the easterner. The saddle-weary Texan was inclined to "let himself go" at his journey's end. In these towns he considered himself a king. He strutted at his pleasure, exhibiting a spirit of recklessness.⁶² The "teetotaler"

⁶² Webb, op. cit., p. 223.

on the drive also increased the urge to celebrate. The cowtowns were the extreme of a "secularized" society with turbulent and disorderly elements of several cultures. Oftentimes the men whose duty was to keep order were only outlaws themselves. There were few common norms among the actors.

These patterns of horsemanship, open range, branding, round-up, line-riding, and trail-driving were patterns that emerged around the specific ends of raising and marketing cattle. Around each of these were normative expectations which guaranteed that these two functions were carried out. These are more or less patterns of specialization. The roles and statuses of the actors are much more specific and rational in content than those described under situational patterns. The goals in the situational patterns were ill-defined and the patterns emerged more or less unconsciously. The instrumental patterns

were more rational patterns. However, the situational patterns, which were common to most of the Texas frontier and varied with the different occupations, **polarized** the content of most of the instrumental patterns, especially those of the round-up and trail driving. That is, the situational patterns were the most important and in the value system of the ranch occupied the position of providing the dominant values as shall be indicated later. With the changing times it was the disappearance of the situational patterns which marked the changing structure. The two instrumental patterns which expressed the early phase the best, those of the round-up and trail driving, were the most radically changed. One, trail driving, disappeared altogether. The other, the round-up, changed in function and became a poor shadow of its former self. The other instrumental patterns of horsemanship and branding continued with the same functions, but lost much of their romance. Since the situational patterns were dominantly of a primary-group nature, a change in the situational patterns was a change in the important primary group. In the early phase of ranching, the outfit with its fraternal sentiments was the basic primary group. However, with the change of ranching, the family became more important, leaving the remaining instrumental patterns, along with new additions with change in ranching methods, as the main patterns associated with the outfit. The causal factors and further consequences of these changes will be taken up in the next chapter.

Integrative patterns

The last of the three types of patterns logically in structure and temporally in development were integrative patterns. Their func-

tion was to lessen possible areas of strain in the other patterns and in the statuses and roles involved. Here they are discussed as belonging in three divisions. In the first are those that arose in meeting instability in power situations. These will later be seen to be very important in the change of ranching. The second are the patterns of stratification. The third involve the relation of the other patterns to the norms of the larger society and the attempts to solve the differences and conflicts.

The power situation became important on the range toward the latter part of the "romantic" phase of cattle ranching. The range was becoming occupied and arguments developed over water-privileges and the richer grazing-areas.⁶³ However, the problem of power was la-

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Raine and Barnes, op. cit., p. 113.

tent in the system from the beginning. Rustling had been considered a casual diversion of the cowboy when out of work.⁶⁴ More and more

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Ibid, p. 116.

there were a greater number of "good" cowboys out of work. All the cowhand needed was a horse, a rope, and a running iron to get the nucleus of a herd.⁶⁵ This was the beginning of cattle rustling. The

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Raine and Barnes, op. cit., p. 4.

easy method of ownership and the branding of wild herds made it hard to establish a legitimate recognition of any exclusive property rights. The branding of "mavericks," which were strays which were theoretically

of unknown parentage and therefore of ownership, had always been a legitimate custom. This easily led to the rationalization that the cattle at hand were strays. Cowhands that always looked approvingly, or just didn't look, at the cattle rustlers, as long as they followed the loose code that the poor man should enjoy comparative immunity, rich men less immunity, and foreigners none at all.⁶⁶ From the settled

⁶⁶ Crowell, op. cit., p. 57.

states there were coming men who had had to leave because of difficulty with the law. Also the closing of such fields as buffalo hunting, brought in men who looked for other outlets for their energy.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Raine and Barnes, op. cit., p. 41.

To meet this growing problem of rustling, the cattle associations were organized. The one in Texas was the Stock Growers Association of Northwest Texas, organized at Graham in 1877.⁶⁸ Bands of citizens

⁶⁸ Wellman, op. cit., p. 251.

had been organized to scout through the cattle grazing districts and try to capture the cattle rustlers.⁶⁹ These associations took over

⁶⁹ H.H. McConnell, Five Years a Cavalryman, p. 308.

the supervision of most of what have been called "cow-customs." These were such instrumental patterns as the matters of water rights, disposal of "mavericks," and later the newer ones of regulating fencing,

quarantine practices, inspection of trail herds, time and manner of round-ups, and the most important ones relating to the limits of each man's range.⁷⁰ Later these associations were instrumental in having

⁷⁰ Dale, op. cit., p. 76.

many of these "customs" enacted into formal law. Inspectors were hired to "cut" trail herds to look for stolen or stray animals. These "protection" men, or cattle detectives, carried their authority in their holsters and their main job was to find as many rustlers as possible and to rid the range of them.⁷¹ The big cowmen overlooked

⁷¹ Holden, op. cit. p. 44.

the fact that most of them had been fairly free in their own day with the running iron, and did not give too much mercy.⁷² In the Panhandle

⁷² James, op. cit., p. 189.

there was an unusual policy of passing criminals or suspected criminals from one ranch to another until they were out of the territory. This was done to many of the foremen who had been doing cattle rustling. The development of associations was one of the first tendencies of the range toward formal social organization. The associations sought a different basis for the ranch's institutional structure than the outfit. Every society must somehow distribute its members in social positions and induce its members to perform their duties. Sometimes the duties are unequal and therefore the rewards are unequal. Whatever the rewards are they must be built into a system of "rights" for

corresponding duties. On the range, there developed a system of

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Cf., Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore, "Some Principles of Stratification," American Sociological Review, X, pp. 242-249; Talcott Parsons, Essays in Sociological Theory Pure and Applied, pp. 166.

stratification which carried out these functions of indicating the desired and undesired qualities and also set standards for expected and valued performance. The system on the range stressed the more general personal qualities. It has been pointed out how important courage and strength were. The outfit made life intolerable for the person even suspected of being cowardly. The leaders were kept because of their courage and no man would follow any one who was not thought courageous.

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As the ranch system developed, specific achievements became

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Webb, op. cit., p. 246.

more valued. One of the first of such achievements, as has been mentioned, was horsemanship. Proving of horsemanship became a range ceremony.

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The contempt for walking carried over into a contempt for

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Ibid, p. 247.

those who walked. Dangerous jobs in cattle working, demanding courage and good horsemanship, were highly valued. The importance of this can be seen in the status of the cook and the horse wrangler. The cook was autocrat in his own realm, and no one would go against his will in his realm. However, his prestige outside of this was slight.

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Ibid, p. 250.

wrangler was usually a younger cowhand and had little prestige. However, in a few places an older cowhand with about as much authority as the foreman would do the job, but this was unusual.⁷⁷ The relation

⁷⁷ Branch, op. cit., p. 43.

of the horse wrangler to a "top hand" was similar to the relation of a dishwasher to a head cook in any first-class restaurant. His lack of touch with cattle kept him away from the danger. He usually worked for the cook and took care of the saddle horses.

The bosses, who became more and more important as "marginal men" as ownership of the ranch became more of an absentee matter, were chosen because of their leadership and ability. The boss got along much better if he had been a broncbuster. It can very well be said of most:

Cow work was sacred to him, and he brooked no interference from outsiders when working a herd.⁷⁸

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William V. Ervin, "West Texas Cattle Trail, Ranch and Wagon Bosses," Cowboys, History of Grazing in Texas, p. 14.

The boss in the range country was more of a friendly counselor than a strict commander. The trail bosses started this tradition and were followed by the range bosses and wagon bosses.⁷⁹ These men had

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Ibid, p. 2.

responsibility and authority similar to a captain on a ship, but the similarities in regard to power or pay ended there.⁸⁰

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ascep Dale, op. cit. p. 46.

The "top-hands" were an important part of the ranch's system of stratification. They were the cowboys of highest status. The top-hands sometimes symbolized their rank by always wearing gloves. This advertised that the wearer was very skilled in riding and roping and was never called upon for coarse manual labor.⁸¹ They also might

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Branch, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

keep their chaps on in town as a sign of vanity. The status of the top-hand was achieved status. He depended upon his superior skill in handling cattle to gain and maintain it. Expert broncbusters were men who proved their superiority by riding a wild horse until it played itself out. He received acknowledgment of this attainment by often being excused from other types of work and even in some cases by receiving higher pay. The bosses were often chosen from the ranks of the top-hands.

The status of the general cowhand emphasized more the personal qualities such as courage and self reliance. His status was more a matter of assumption.⁸² The cowhand chose to be a cowhand and because

82

Cf. Hiller's distinction of ascription, where a person is classified in advance of his preparation; assumption, where he voluntarily enters it; achieved status, where he must show superiority by winning over rivals. E. T. Hiller, Social Relations and Structures, pp. 335-337.

of his choice entered into the obligations and rights of being such a

person. The fact that he had to prove himself before he was fully accepted by the outfit gave even the general status of cowhand a tendency toward a status of achievement.

There was no basis for a status of ascription, which in general must be based on birth or biologically hereditary qualities, such as sex, age, or race. Such a possibility passed with the replacement of the Mexican peon by the American cowhand. Therefore, with the disappearance of the situational patterns emphasizing personal qualities, the possibility of a more specialized system of stratification stressing working skill emerged.

In content, the statuses of the early phase of ranching were made up mostly of personal identification in the outfit.⁸³ Friendship

⁸³ Ibid., pp. 334-335.

and affectional relations were common. With more division of labor, utility relations, in which the content is the utility of goods or services given or exchanged, became more important. However, in General these were not the most important on the open range. The higher position given to the top-hand and boss was a type of personal identification in which the top-hand or boss were imitated or supported in some particular action. The relation was voluntary. There was little direct dominance. The cowhand felt too free to move on to put up with having to be submissive.

The ranch's system of stratification may be summarized as an unspecialized stratified order with functional emphasis upon the outfit and roles connected with it. The outfit was equalitarian and there was no rigid class structure on the range. The looseness of the organ-

ization made it very mobile in its opportunities.

The cowhands came from a larger society and most of them had been raised as children in a very different culture from that of the range country. Therefore, it is to be expected that many of the deeper attitudes present in the larger tradition of the American culture would be felt in the ranching patterns. The cowhands had derived most of their character structure in the parent society. The expectation is borne out by the presence of some key "configurations."⁸⁴

⁸⁴ "Configurations" are those basic covert culture patterns which may or may not be explicitly formulated but which do give to the culture a definite value orientation. See Gregory Bateson, Naven, for good discussion of "configurations" and other similar concepts.

The cowhand felt the ethos of his parent culture and sought to give it expression. Also, he had to legitimize the norms of ranching in their relation to the more official norms of the larger society. These ranch norms had the position of unofficial standing, and often were counter to the prevailing legal norms. However, since the cowhand shared the more basic "value-attitudes"⁸⁵ of the larger group,

⁸⁵ Term meaning the same as "ethos," "configuration" etc., used by Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action. pp. 254, 391, 718-719.

he felt the necessity of legitimizing his sub-rosa norms in terms of these ultimate values and attitudes. This does not mean that there was an official philosophy or dogma of ranching. However, around the camp fires of the round-up and trail or in the bunk houses or wherever the men might get together, there emerged a very good means of expressing the ethos of the dominant culture and its relation to the cowhand's

life. This means was the cowboy songs. These songs had many

86

Lomax, op. cit., Introduction, p. XXVI.

origins; words from England and Scotland, poems from newspapers, parodies of old songs and hymns. Some were composed by the cowhands themselves. In every sense, they were a group product.

Whatever the most gifted could produce must bear the criticism of the entire camp, and agree with the idea of a group of men. In this sense, therefore, any song that came from such a group would be the joint product of a number of them.⁸⁷

87

Ibid. p. XXVI.

One of the most prominent configurations in the cowhands' songs was that of mother. The general masculine atmosphere probably accentuated this. In song it was expressed as:

I wonder if there I shall meet her,
My mother whom God took away,
If in the star-studded heavens I'll greet her
At the round-up that's on the last day⁸⁸

88

From "Cowboys' Meditation" quoted in Ibid, p. 123.

"Mother" was presented as the solver of all problems and her advice should be followed. It should be noted that a guilt-feeling is expressed in some of these songs.

Come all you old cowboys wherever you go,
Your mothers' words you should not ignore.
When you get down all out and in.
Its then you will find that she's your best friend.

89

89

"Speaking of a Cowboys' Home," quoted, Ibid, p. 316.

The dominant society is symbolized in the terms of this mother-role. Ranching and range life are beyond the pale and the safety of her care, but the fact that she is somewhere gives a basis of security.

Connected with the patterns about the mother-role were those about the home.

Now though it is only a Kansas dugout I
left behind to roam,
I'd give my saddle and pony to be at
home, sweet home.⁹⁰

90

"Home Sweet Home", quoted, Ibid, p. 124.

In this song, mention is made of a common occurrence that made men seek the career of the cowhand. The author of this song has killed a rival lover and had to leave. This indicates the attitudes connected with a home, such as love and marriage. In the masculine world of the outfit, women were either worshipped or written off as the worst part of creation. Many songs speak of romances that turned out bad, while a few speak of loyal girls waiting for their men. Love was an impossible ideal either way. One way it was prevented by unfaithfulness, the other way by distance or other circumstances. The attitude here is similar to that expressed by soldiers, sailors, and other masculine groups cut off from the major part of the society. The attitude was that the ideal place for women was in the home, but the women met in the towns at the end of the trail were commonly regarded with a different attitude. They were not the same type of women as those "back home."

In his youth, the cowhand received the usual American religious instruction. In consequence, almost every record of tragic death on

the range, as preserved in the cowboy songs, including some reference to the forgiveness of sin, or to the need of furnishing a Christian burial. Usually, this religious sentiment was that of the dissenting Protestant sects, with a personal God, who was as close as breathing and, who, like the mother-image, directed and watched over them.⁹¹ It

⁹¹Raine and Barnes, op. cit., p. 19.

is not a coincidence that religion and mother were connected in these songs. Together they formed the basis for security. One song relates the conversion of one man who dared to doubt part of this basic belief.

But at last Jack got him under
And he slugged him oncet or twicet,
And straightway Bob admitted
The divinity of Christ.
But Jack kept reasoning with him
Till the poor cuss gave a yell,
And 'lowed he'd been mistaken.⁹²
In his views concerning hell.

⁹²"Silver Jack," quoted, Lomax, op. cit., p. 234.

The concern over salvation was expressed in songs such as "The Hell-bound Train,"⁹³ and "The Dim Narrow Trail."⁹⁴ The hereafter was

⁹³Ibid., p. 336.

⁹⁴Ibid., pp. 44-46.

presented in terms of a great round-up or the last trail drive. In the folk-lore, Hell was even pictured as riding herd on a wild stampede for eternity.

The cowhands felt that the rest of society looked down on them and tried to legitimize their position.

Though the congregation thought
That the cowboys as a race
Were a kind of moral outlaw
With no good claim to grace
Is it very strange that cowboys are
A rough and reckless crew
When their garb forbids their doing right
As Christian people do?⁹⁵

95

"The Cowboy at Church," Ibid, p. 274.

Ibid, p. 11.

This song expresses the uncomfortable feeling of a cowhand who found himself within a church where people seem to be looking at him as a race apart. The strain of the two sets of norms were felt and expressed in such songs as,

Society bans me so savage and dodge.
That the Masons would bull me out of their lodge.
If I had hair on my chin, I might pass for the goat
That bore all the sins in the ages remote;
But why it is, I can never understand. 96
For each of the patriarchs owned a big brand.

96

"The Cowboy," quoted, Ibid, pp. 67-69.

The cowboy thus found legitimate orientation in the fact that his calling was one which was considered honorable in the Bible. His position was similar to Abel and this made his occupation almost sacred, at least it was considered high in God's esteem.

Summation

The early phase of the Texas cattle ranch can be typified by the term outfit. This was the social grouping which expressed the dominant pattern on the open range. Leadership was mostly charismatic or in

personal terms. Louis Wallis, in studying the early Hebrews, employs a useful concept which is applicable to the "outfit." This is the concept of ⁹⁷mishpat, which represented the primitive sense of justice

⁹⁷ Louis Wallis, God and the Social Process, pp. 11-17.

on the part of these nomadic peoples. To the early Hebrews it was a covert, unwritten, uncodified feeling of ⁹⁸clan-equalitarianism. The

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 11.

clan or tribe in the desert must maintain equalitarian relationships as a condition of preserving the morale of the group. The resources are looked on as the right of the whole group. Somewhat the same type of justice ruled on the range. However, in place of the clan or tribe which emphasized the kinship tie, it was the "outfit," stressing the bond of common hardships and work experiences. This type of justice is similar to that found in gangs and informal groups faced with a dangerous situation or hard life. There is a great amount of in-group feeling along with it. The outfit was no exception, as is evident by the ferocity of the conflict with shepherders and farmers. The only other basis of authority was the possession of cattle. Here possession was much more important than any concept of formal ownership. This free feeling accounts for the amount of rustling and sometimes it gave rustling a legitimate place. The owner depended more upon the loyalty of his men than upon the recognition of his legal title. The abundance of wild cattle in the early days contributed to the maintenance of this free practice. However, the emergence of the use of branding and the patterns associated with it were attempts to create a more

formal basis than that of personal loyalty. The cattle associations further carried on this tendency and tried to maintain the gained positions of their members against the increasing stream of newcomers. The "outfit," however, throughout this organizing phase of ranching, maintained its primary group quality of quasi-charismatic leadership and mishpat, or popular justice. The more general and less rational situational patterns polarized the normative patterns. The instrumental patterns even were relatively unspecified and, in such patterns as the rand-up and the trail, expressed and symbolized the broad values of the outfit. The integrative patterns attempted to give these values a broader orientation and more formal and manifest expression.

The first indicates the change in property foundations, the second in technical practices, the third in the social patterns. They all show the basic processes involved toward secularizing the ranch pattern.

It was pointed out earlier that institutional patterns are fundamentally patterns of controlled and regularized human activity. It was human activity which constructed the institutional system designed by combining the various patterns to the exclusion of disturbing factors. Also, similarly, human activity maintained the system and attempts to keep it from being different from day to day, and it refines and reconstructs the system by selecting the portions which continue a certain desired part of the existing system.

¹ See Florian Znaniecki, The Method of Sociology, pp. 1-2, and changes arise which are very important to the sociology of the

CHAPTER IV

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE OF THE TEXAS CATTLE RANCH

In the last chapter, an analysis of the institutional structure of the early Texas cattle ranch was made. It was indicated that this was the "romantic" phase of the history of the ranch. In this chapter, the concern is one of the presentation of the development of the ranch into its present-day institutional structure. This means the dynamic change of the outfit. It was a change from the "open range" to a "fenced range;" it was a change from working "longhorns" to working "short horns;" it was a change from a "fraternity" to a "business." The first indicates the change in property foundations, the second in technical practices, the third in the social patterns. They all show the basic processes involved toward secularizing the ranch pattern.

It was pointed out earlier that institutional patterns are fundamentally patterns of controlled and regularized human activity. It was human activity which constructed the institutional system analyzed by combining the various patterns to the exclusion of disturbing factors. Also, similarly, human activity maintains the system and attempts to keep it from being different from day to day, and it redefines and reconstructs the system by selecting new patterns which will continue a certain desired part of the existing system. Deviations

¹ See Florian Znaniecki, The Method of Sociology, p. 43.

and changes arise which are very important in creating a new system.

Two kinds of impediments are met with in human activity which often cause a shift in the system by their presence or removal. One type has been called axiological impediments.² From the point of view

²
Ibid, p. 299.

of the system, these are structural irrationalities or conflicts in goals or values. Some of the values are conflicting and are incompatible with other active tendencies of the system. Some particular action is desired but, if carried through, it means loss of another value. The means are present to carry out the action, but the attitudes of the actors toward a particular part of the action prevents its completion. A good example of this type of impediment is the custom in India of the "sacred cow" which prevents the cattle from being used for eating. A more common example is that of the conflicting definitions of the official and unofficial norms of any group. Informal organizations in business firms, industry, religious groups, states, and other groups oftentimes prevent some of the activities sanctioned by or even desired by the official norms of the group.³ The ranch in its development had

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 Pitirim A. Sorokin, Society, Culture, and Personality, pp. 79-82.

similar impediments. The informal characteristics of the outfit and range customs, as shall be shown, prevented establishment of more competitive business practices. The open range was considered almost sacred by some cowmen and this hindered fencing. Most of the discussion of intra-institutional, inter-institutional, and supra-institutional factors involve the removal of such impediments. Removal of these

impediments meant change of attitudes of the actors toward the values involved. Also important causally are technical impediments.⁴ These

⁴ Znaniecki, op. cit., p. 299.

are impediments when a certain goal or value is desired and the means are lacking. This is a lack within the system and presents a limiting factor on any changes that could be made. It is these technical factors which shall be considered first.

Technical factors

Webb has well documented how the pioneer tradition familiar in the east was held up when it reached the new geographic environment of the Great Plains.⁵ It lacked certain technical patterns that would

⁵ Walter P. Webb, The Great Plains, pp. 140-204.

allow it to continue and settle this vast territory. Its methods of farming would not work without the type of land and climate familiar on the east coast. In this waiting period, before the technical patterns emerged that would allow some of the old patterns to continue, there was created in Texas the institutional structure analyzed in the last chapter which could utilize the new environment in its basic material aspects. This new pattern spread over a great part of the Great Plains area through diffusion and migration.⁶ However, with new developments,

⁶ Ibid., pp. 224-225.

supplied by invention, new possibilities were created which changed

the situation. Besides making the settling of this new region possible with a continuance of some of the old farming practices, they made possible certain alterations of some of the active tendencies in the Texas ranching system itself.

One of the main technical factors was the extension of the railroad west and south-west. This increase of railroad transportation meant that other means of delivering cattle to the market could be used rather than herding the cattle up the trails.⁷ Moreover, it meant the coming of towns and "civilization."

⁷Daniel McArthur, The Cattle Industry of Texas, p. 196.

Another technical improvement which was very important was the barbed wire fence, which allowed economical fencing where timber was scarce. It provided a type of fence that could hold cattle in or out. The first roll of barbed wire was sold in Gainesville, in 1875, and the next decade saw its spread all over Texas.

Civilization began in Texas with the introduction of wire fences. It has done more for the progress and order, more for the morals and civilization of our people than the law and gospel combined. Far more than the printing press, the pulpit and the court house, these last the three great moving forces of our earth.⁸

⁸From speech by Mr. E.R. Lane at Stockmen's Convention in Austin, January, 1884, quoted by R.C. Holt, "Barbed Wire," The Texas Monthly, IV, pp. 174-185. Such a statement undoubtedly overstated, but it indicated the importance of this change.

Connected with the introduction of barbed wire was the invention of the windmill which allowed establishing a range where there were no streams. It also created the possibility of irrigation and watering of crops. This meant that farming would soon become a contender for the expected patterns in the state.

use of the land which at present was being used for cattle ranching almost exclusively.

It is seen that several technical inventions preceeded the change of the ranching system and were necessary to it , but their functions and roles were not automatic, but depended upon the changing attitudes and definitions of the people. The above inventions permitted new alternatives to be utilized within the ranch system, but it was a matter of removal of the axiological impediments or structural irrationalities which enabled these alternatives to emerge. The actors, through change of goals, definitions, values and sentiments, chose the alternatives and, in so doing, effected change in the total system. From the point of view of the ranching system such a removal of axiological impediments was a process of rational choice based on considerations of efficiency, economy, and practicality. From the point of view of other institutions it was a matter of acculturation and accommodation. The ranching system borrowed many patterns from the groups surrounding it. Also accommodative patterns emerged in the attempts of the ranchers and the surrounding group (farmers, sheepherders, etc.) to create a common basis of solidarity. From the point of view of the whole American Society, it was a process of assimilation after several stages of accommodation. Ranching represented a peculiar cultural configuration to be integrated into the main values of this society. Legal and political questions were among the problems that came in for attention and solution.

Ibid., p. 123.

Intra-institutional factors

The institutional patterns analyzed in the last chapter were the ideal but expected patterns in the early phase of ranching. By 1880

there were many deviations from these expected patterns when population was increasing and the range was beginning to be crowded. Some of the early ranchers saw this and in order to provide against the coming competition, began to buy up the land and to fence in their holdings.⁹ They filed homestead claims for themselves and had their

⁹Paul Wellman, The Trampling Herd, p. 290.

friends and employees do the same, always along a stream. In the southeast part of Texas this was done early and with the large ranches of the area fenced in there was a social order approaching that of serfdom. For example, Shanghai Pierce used prison labor to furnish seventy-five field laborers each year.¹⁰

¹⁰C.S. Douglas, Cattle Kings of Texas, p. 52.

The cowmen who looked for free grass kept moving westward. The tendency to protect grazing rights by leasing, or better by purchasing and fencing the land, followed them.¹¹ Oftentimes, the area fenced had little or no relation to that part which was owned,

¹¹C.C. Rister, Southern Plainsmen. p. 123.

giving rise to the use of the term "outlaw" fences.¹² Fences began to

¹²Ibid., p. 123.

take the place of the old line-rider. Even where the old "law of the range" was sentimentally strong, the fear that some other stockman might come in and

lease the land away from them compelled many cattlemen to fence the land and lease or buy it, even though they might not have done so otherwise.¹³ There was opposition, of course. The small ranchers

13

J. Evetts Haley, "The Grass Lease Fight and Attempted Impeachment of the First Panhandle Judge," The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXXVIII, pp. 1-27.

could not pay for fencing, or buying or leasing land; therefore, they fought the passage of statutes allowing leasing and fought fences by fence cutting.¹⁴ On the other hand, ranchmen who were buying range

14

Douglas, op. cit., p. 283.

land and fencing it sought the passage of such lease bills. Oftentimes they invoked extra-legal measures, such as "the Winchester quarantine," to protect the rights to their land.¹⁵ With the help of the

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Haley, op. cit., p. 1.

rest of the state, which was concerned over the wild growth of ranching, they were able to pass such a law in April, 1883.¹⁶ However, an

16

Ibid., pp. 1-2.

axiological impediment was present here. The stockmen followed the old "law of the range" and could not morally feel that they could compete with the other ranchers and, therefore, they let each man take his land at the minimum bid without bidding against him. This, of course, nullified any competitive provisions of the bill.¹⁷ The business spirit

¹⁷Ibid., p. 2.

was rather weak in this respect.

Wire cutting was done by secret bands made up of some of the small ranchers.¹⁸ To counteract these bands associations were

¹⁸Douglas, op. cit., p. 283.

organized which attempted to protect their members. One such organization was the Central Texas Wire Fence Protection Association which organized itself:

for the purpose of assisting by all lawful means the officers, and courts of the state, in bringing to justice those who destroy property by cutting down and destroying fence, and to this end we do hereby publish and adopt the following constitution....¹⁹

¹⁹From preamble to the Constitution of the Central Texas Wire Fence Protective Association.

The secret organizations who fought the building of fences called themselves the Land League, the Owls, the Javelinas, the Blue Devils, or some other appropriate names.²⁰ They burned posts and stole rolls of wire.

²⁰R.N. Richardson and C.C. Rister, The Greater Southwest, p. 355.

The windmills came with the fencing of land because oftentimes the land fenced was not extensive enough to include open water. Also, the continual necessity to push west because of lack of land made the necessity of newer means of watering more acute as the more arid parts

of Texas were being occupied.²¹ Within the ranch, new specialities

21

Holt, op. cit. p. 176.

emerged such as the "windmill" wranglers, which caused a greater division of labor and a rationalization of the roles functionally necessary.²² The outfit tended to become a group of employees and not a

22

Paul Wellman, The Trampling Herd. p. 293.

band of fraternal horsemen.

Fencing and closing off of land caused the necessity of more efficient methods of raising cattle and improvement in the breeds. Many of the larger ranches began to breed and raise better and different types of herds. This meant that specialized men were needed.

Besides the internal factor of fencing the land, because of the growing competition, another factor of change was that the cattle business was becoming a fashionable investment. With the news of the great profits to be made, eastern and even foreign money poured into the cattle country looking for a quick way to be doubled.²³ Cattle

23

W. M. Raine and W. C. Barnes, Cattle, p. 231.

syndicates with elaborate equipment and improved stocks appeared. The first group of workers in the west to feel and resent the dominance of the corporation were the cowboys. The small investor could not meet the competition of the cattle syndicate.²⁴ The result was inevitable.

24

Richardson and Rister, op. cit., p. 336.

It soon became apparent that this universal loyalty did not carry over to the big outfits. The cowboy was essentially rural in his outlook. He belonged to the neighborhood where he lived. The very name syndicate was an abstraction. How could any Texan.... feel any warmth of feeling for a corporation with a board of directors sitting in London or Edinburgh.²⁵

²⁵ Raine and Barnes, op. cit., p. 239.

The cowboy strike of 1883 showed the basic antagonisms of the old-time cowboy and the new ranching corporation.²⁶ Ranches

²⁶ Ruth A. Allen, "A Cowboy Strike," (Manuscript) History of Grazing in Texas, Volume on Cowboys.

in north Texas had been taken over by large land companies who kept out and forbade the participation of small owners in the round-up.²⁷

²⁷ Ibid., p. 3.

They also kept their employees from attempting to own their own herds. Some of the strikers formed bands which stole cattle from the different ranches and drove them across the state line into New Mexico.²⁸ Besides striking for higher wages, they were more

²⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

fundamentally expressing their belief in the older "cow-customs" and demanding that the small herd owner also be allowed to run cattle on the ranch premises. The strike emphasized the internal conflict within the ranching system. The big syndicates of course emphasized the rationality of the industry and the removal of patterns that prevented profits from being the important

goal. The Knights of Labor in this period, during its growth from 1884-1887, included many cowboys.²⁹ Local assemblies existed over

29

Ibid. p. 2.

the entire western Texas plains, and many locals of cowboys wrote to the congressional committee investigating the Great Southwest Strike which was right in the very heart of the ranch country.³⁰

30

Ibid. p. 2.

Ibid., p. 53.

There was another small deviant tendency which early expressed the possibility of a more rationalized structure in ranching. This was the attempt to introduce meat-packing plants into Texas and thus to remove the necessity of trail driving.³¹ This attempt was not

31

T. J. Cauley, "Early Meat Packing Plants in Texas," Southwestern Political and Social Science Quarterly, IX, p. 464.

represented the ranchowners. They were organized around the idea of property. Thus they broke away from the ranch workers who were not a part of them. The attempt was unsuccessful at first and it wasn't until outside capital came in about 1902 that the meat packing industry entered the state.

More important was the growth of the cattle associations mentioned in the last chapter. They represented the interests of the cattleman and gave him a statewide and even national sounding board. As was pointed out, the original purpose of the associations was to stop cattle rustling and to afford a better means of catching each cattleman's strays. Salaried inspectors were employed to "cut" trail herds for stolen or stray animals. When trail driving went out, due to fencing of the land and the building of railroads, these inspectors

were located at the vantage shipping points and stockyards.³² The

32

William C. Holden, Alkali Trails, p. 52.

associations also established legal departments to help prosecute cattle thieves. They lobbied for bills of interest to the cattle-man in both national and state capitols. They kept vigilant eyes upon matters of transportation, accommodations, rates, and traffic schedules.³³ They formed a class consciousness among the members and gave

33

Ibid., p. 53.

the ranching men a feeling of organization. They supplemented and anticipated many territorial laws and regulations.³⁴

34

E. E. Dale, Cow Country, p. 76.

As organizations, the associations were class organizations and represented the ranchowners. They were organized around the protection of property. Thus they broke away from the old outfit. The ranch workers were not a part of them. The typical employer-employee relation was encouraged by this. The patterns which the associations attempted to uphold out of the old "cow-customs" were instrumental patterns and of these only those which contributed to organizing the ranch on a rational businesslike basis were utilized.

The tendencies mentioned in this section of fencing, incorporation, unionization, and association were intra-systemal factors of the Texas cattle ranch. They were latent within the attitudes and values of its members and emerged when they technically could and

when the impediments within the institutional structure were removed. The removal of such impediments was the prominent feature of the rationalization of the ranching system. The three types of distributive, collective and conjunctural phenomena mentioned earlier are important here. The growth of the use of fencing, windmills, and the other technical improvements, is a good example of distributive phenomena. This, in general, was not group action, but was rather the result of individual acts of specific persons acting in terms of their immediate goals. However, the groups of wire-cutters and those protecting the fences were acting as groups and were typical of collective phenomena in which the individuals took concerted action to gain a common objective. The cowboy strike and organization of the cowboys is another example of group or collective action, as are the formation of cattle associations.

The growth of the corporate structure and of syndicates were a matter of distributive phenomena, being in most cases the acts of individuals investing huge fortunes. Together, these phenomena resulted in providing a more rational specific structure. The rules for marketing, property rights, salaries, investments, etc., were handled more impersonally and the impediments to impersonalization in the outfit were thus removed. The higher cost made the rancher necessarily more efficient and profit-minded in his calculations. Only ranches which practiced such methods could compete with the other ranchers or the other entrepreneurs who wanted the land, such as farmers and sheepherders. The stockowner, to maintain his own status, had to accept the new practices whether he agreed with them or not. The outfit became more of an occupational or industrial organization and lost most of its primary group function.

Inter-institutional factors

The Texas cattle ranch was by no means the only institution in Texas in its day and, with fences and windmills and the danger of Indians removed, the "nester," or settler, became more a part of the cattle country's life. The settler in his movement pushed the cattlemen farther and farther west. This forced the adoption of the newer mechanisms of windmills, earthen tanks, and fences, and increased the competition for the land.³⁵ The pressure toward all the tendencies of

³⁵ Holden, op. cit., p. 49.

rationality were increased.

The term nester was a derogatory term invented by cowboys to apply to those hands who had changed from ranching to plowing.³⁶ They

³⁶ Branch, op. cit., p. 122.

had, in a manner of speaking, quit the faith. The "aristocrat" on horseback looked down on the ploughman and a general misunderstanding grew up between them.³⁷ However, the ranching people did not present

³⁷ Webb, op. cit., p. 206.

a particularly formidable front against its many enemies. As was shown, there smoldered among these several internal groups the flames of jealousy and suspicion which prevented a united front against the on-coming tide.³⁸

³⁸ Dale, op. cit., p. 86.

Besides the nesters, there were the sheepherders who came into the cattle country. The cowmen generally blamed the sheepherders for all the trouble they had.³⁹ The latter differed a great deal in

³⁹ Wellman, op. cit. p. 368.

personality type from the cattlemen. The dreamy, often sullen, character of the sheepherder made him seem "queer" and "stubborn" to the cowman.⁴⁰ The latter despised the sheepherder and classed him with

⁴⁰ Ibid.

his sheep. He was their scape-goat. However, the sheepherders increased despite the bloody massacres on both sides. The sheepherders were one of the fence-cutting groups and always considered the range open.

Between the cowmen and the sheepherders and the settlers there emerged several forms of accommodation to bring the conflict to an end. The settler in Texas was in control of the legislature, but the ranchers had sufficient power to win some fights, such as the Grass Lease Case.⁴¹ Fencing itself was a form of accommodation because,

⁴¹ Haley, op. cit. pp. 1-27.

when respected, it represented an agreement as to who legally owned the fenced land. Besides the nesters and the sheepmen, a type of institution that put pressure on the cattle ranch was the corporation in the form of railroads and meat packing. These corporate interests increased the pressure toward combination and association within the

ranch itself.⁴² The packers and railroads forced the cowmen to develop

⁴²Frederic Paxson, The Great Demobilization and Other Essays,
p. 61.

large blocks of power and wealth in order not to be defeated. Either the individual owners must get together into associations or have a great cattle company succeed them. They were all in keen competition for the profits in beef. Accommodation out of the rate wars, etc., often meant the favored associations receiving special rates with the individual producer losing out.⁴³ All these groups, plus the increas-

⁴³Ibid., p. 59.

ing number of towns, caused changes in the social activities of the cowboy. The law and order maintained in such towns pointed to accommodative agreements and the creation of common bases of solidarity.

Acculturation was also an important process in the relation of the ranch to the other institutions. Often, in the increasing contact, the cowhands would mingle with the settlers and perhaps take the daughters to a dance.⁴⁴ In a section which had been predominantly

⁴⁴Dale, op. cit., pp. 225-228.

masculine for a long time such a situation often overcame feelings of animosity. Also, many marriages resulted from such friendships, causing the cowhands to settle down to farming or at least to operating a small ranch. In such a way as this the family and marriage patterns became more a part of the cattle land. This meant a different type of

society and ranching in the change of the

primary group structure, with family groupings and neighborhood contacts. As the ranches were fenced the ranchers in certain areas often took over both herding sheep and cattle ⁴⁵ and the barriers between

⁴⁵B. Youngblood and A.B. Cox., An Economic Study of a Typical Ranching Area on the Edwards Plateau of Texas, p. 74.

these groups began to break down.

The use of the windmill and fences made the life of the cowboy more similar to that of the other groups and his horseback view tended to change. The strain caused by pressure on his interests made him seek for legal protection and an acceptance of norms which were held by other groups. The cowman began to take a more typical rural view, one very much like that of other agricultural areas.

The distributive, collective, and conjunctural aspects of these inter-institutional changes are easy to see. Most of the accommodation was in terms of collective action by one or more of the groups involved. Most of the acculturation was in terms of distributive action and was more an individual matter. The conjunctural results were such as to further increase the rationalization of the ranch and to make more unnecessary the primary group function of ego security for the outfit.

Supra-institutional factors

The Texas cattle ranch was ^{not} always a part of the American society and it has been shown how the attempt to legitimize itself with the dominant motifs of this society produced some of the integrative patterns. The process involved in the relation between the larger society and ranching in the change of the outfit is assimilation

following accommodation. The cowmen were, in a sense, in the position of immigrants. Their normative patterns had no legitimate (legal or informal) place within the larger group. Therefore, some of the patterns which were in opposition to the main values of the larger society had to be dropped, and it was necessary for the property holdings and practices to be legalized. The cowmen had found eastern law unsuited in many respects and were called lawless because they broke it.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Webb, op. cit., p. 206.

They could not remain independent long. The ranch had to become a legitimate institution or disappear. It was competing with some already legitimate ones for the land, which in the new western areas was controlled by the government.

In Texas the land system was independent of the Federal Government. Assimilation here, then, was somewhat easier than in the nation as a whole, because Texas had for its foundation the Mexican and Spanish systems which had understood the peculiar problems of this arid region.⁴⁷ Also Texas was less politically controlled by an agri-

⁴⁷ Webb, op. cit., p. 42.

culturally-minded Congress. The Texas legislature early passed laws that regulated wire cutting, making it illegal, and also made unlawful the illegal fencing of unowned land.⁴⁸ However, in Texas the situation

⁴⁸ Richardson and Rister, op. cit., p. 356.

was not without conflict as is shown by the character of the board in-

volved in the Grass Lease Fight. The board was set up to administer the leasing of grass to the ranchers. It was hated by all concerned. The east Texans did not like it because they claimed it favored the big cowmen. West-Texas free-grassers hated it because they saw in it the passing of the open range. The conservative cowmen generally hated it for its usurpation of power and vacillating policy.⁴⁹ All

⁴⁹ Haley, op. cit., p. 8.

the political alignments and animosities were expressed in this board. To the cowmen, the board had run into the code of the range, which was one of common decency. They, using this code, nullified the competitive provisions of the leasing law. The cowmen won this fight, but in the long run the ideas expressed by the board succeeded. A newer type of patterning emerged to gain legitimate recognition.

On a national level, the fights for profits between railroads, packers, and cattlemen resulted in rate wars which led to many of the laws regulating trade.⁵⁰ One of these enactments was the Inter-

⁵⁰ Paxson, op. cit., p. 61.

state Commerce Act of 1887, which grew, in part, out of conditions in the range country.⁵¹

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 61.

The land system was the most important legal foundation furnished by the larger society. As was said, Texas understood the problem that ranches needed more land and tended to parcel out the land on a basis of classification which allotted more sections of land to grazing. However,

even in Texas, a rancher had to do a lot of trading and buying to obtain a ranch of the size he needed and one that was all in one piece.⁵²

52

Youngblood and Cox, op. cit., p. 300.

The land system in any form closed off the free grass and open range. With most of the land fenced and nearly all of it individually owned, valuation was more in terms of land than in the number of cattle. Therefore, efficient methods of ranching were a necessity and the rationally organized ranching system was the only possibility of carrying out the manifest functions of raising and marketing cattle.

Most of the action in this accommodative process was of the collective type. The problems involved were usually of a political or legal nature and took the combined action of various groups to realize any success. Associations on all sides fought the matter out at the polls and in the courts. The results were still toward greater rationalization.

The result

The result of the conjuncture of these various processes can now be looked at more closely. The reason why the change was toward a more rational structure instead of remaining a traditional one has not been explicitly stated. It was necessary, if the ranch structure was to have any permanence, that the personal relations take on some characteristics of an organized group. In the early ranch structure these personal relations formed the basic solidarity of the society. The ideal and material interests of the members depended upon the continuity of the outfit. There was no other group present to provide

for social functions. As was pointed out, there was no distinguishable hereditary basis for a traditional status. The primary group character of the outfit was dependent upon the lack of another more stable relation. The instrumental patterns were based upon cattle as property. This provided a very mobile unit and made these patterns dependent upon sparse population and unsettled land for their effective operation. With the increasing pressure from inside growth and outside competition, there were tendencies to formalize and protect the unstable basis of gained status. The land which before, because of its abundance, had been relatively valueless now became the center of conflict. The ranch was in the center of such conflict and the government and the larger society became involved in the solutions. The lack of a caste or race system kept a plantation pattern from forming. The primary group functions of the outfit were taken by the family and neighborhood. The ranch and the outfit itself turned to business organizational patterns. Various ones became important with corporate structures playing a large part and were reasonably successful because of the size of the ranch. However, the smaller ranch was more important and individual ownership was the more common pattern, with state and national associations looking after the common interests of such ownerships.

It is hard to generalize about the ranch structure now. It is important to realize that size and kind of ranching vary with the areas involved. However, the social or institutional patterns are not very different, even with widely different economic problems and material base. In general, the ranch seems to fit into the pattern of most of farm life in Texas except that there is more of outside labor coming

in to do the work. The job of the ranch hands today demands more of a thorough appreciation of different types of animals, and of veterinary skill, range management, mechanics, and other specialized subjects than was required of the cowboy of old.⁵³ Technically trained men are

⁵³ Youngblood and Cox, op. cit., p. 306.

in more demand. The ranch owner cannot afford to turn over the care and breeding of a thousand dollar bull to an inexperienced and untrained man. Status in the present-day outfit is more dependent upon the training and skill involved in the specific functional role filled. Mexican labor is used on many ranches. Some of these laborers are itinerants who pick cotton, shear sheep and do other jobs in the whole agricultural field of Texas. These do not form a part of the ranch community. However, there are regular laborers of Mexican descent who occupy permanent positions on the ranch. Generally, they are paid about one-half to two-thirds what the Anglo worker is paid.⁵⁴ Also,

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 308.

there is generally a class barrier here which prevents too intimate relations outside of the work group.

The ranch owner generally lives in town close by the ranch. The pattern is one of the men spending a great part of the time on the ranch while their families live in town. This usually means that the town property is considered the possession of the wife and her status is dependent upon how well she keeps this looking nice.⁵⁵ This fits

55

Ibid, p. 407.

into the general pattern of the conjugal family. The husband establishes and maintains the family's status with his occupational rank and property. The wife symbolizes the status and participates in a wider "humanistic" culture of church and club activities.⁵⁶ The pat-

56

Talcott Parsons, Essays in Sociological Theory, p. 246.

tern of the ranchowner's family is closer to the average urban pattern than to the general rural pattern. Two factors account for this. In general, the rancher is in better financial position and occupies a higher status than most individual farmers. Also, the fact that the husband is away most of the time puts more emphasis on the role of the mother in the family, and is similar to the matricentric tendencies of the average urban middle-class family.⁵⁷ The emotional secur-

57

Ibid, p. 243.

ity functions and training of the children are largely in her hands.

It scarcely needs to be noted that the rural character of the ranch necessarily still exists. This is even more true among the smaller ranches where the pattern of having both ranch and town houses cannot be afforded. The ranch families must of necessity live on the ranches alone. The conditions that go along with ranching also mean a sparse population. This carries with it some isolation.⁵⁸ However,

58

Youngblood and Cox, op. cit., p. 412.

modern means of communication and transportation make this isolation less effective. Neighbors are often as near as the phone or as the Ford.⁵⁹

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Ibid., p. 412.

The community life of the rancher centers around the ranch town. Here is the concentration of the specialized activities that contribute to the life of the ranch. Here are found churches, schools, businesses, marketing agencies, doctors, lawyers, and other institutions and professional persons who serve the community. Within the community, there are neighborhood groups which do things together. People will pick up each other's mail and buy things for each other in town. The neighborhoods are often named after some prominent citizen, a church, a school, some special physical sign, or some part of history.⁶⁰ Lodges, such as Masons, Woodmen of the World, Elks,

60

Ibid., p. 402.

Maccabees, and Eastern Star, form some part of the social life of the community. There are also such activities as barbeques, reunions, picnics, lectures, parties, arbor religious services, and dances.

The community population is relatively stable. Few of the sons of ranchers go into any other occupation. The girls often marry boys who ranch or get employment in the community. This makes both horizontal and vertical mobility rather slow.⁶¹ Such lines as those of

61

Ibid., p. 425.

race and class are almost never crossed in rising in status. The ranch community maintains the standard of the small town in that anybody's business is everybody's concern. Party-line listening is a commonly accepted pattern.

Summing up, it can be seen that the ranch outfit has passed from a primary group to a secondary group in its functions and patterns. The family has replaced it as the main primary group in which a person can act in unspecified ways. The status in the community is still dependent upon status in the outfit, but the content of the expected roles has changed. Now it is a role of property ownership or occupational efficiency and depends less upon general personal qualities. The outfit has lost its governmental function in the sense that it was the only law in the cattle country. Now it has been assimilated into the state and national system and abides by the legal patterns of the community.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Survivals

Many of the patterns of the early phase of ranch life have passed into the general culture. They have often taken on functions quite different from the original pattern. The rodeo is one such pattern which came from the contests often entered into at round-ups or at special gatherings. It has now become a show which has even moved into the place of the circus by appearing at Madison Square Garden. Of the survivals, however, it is undoubtedly the most authentic. The performers are usually "top-hands" whose skill in roping and riding are well known. The rodeo was at first a contest between the outfits. Winning an event contributed both to the status of the individual and to the glory of his group. Now, the rodeo is on a level of a community function or that of several communities combined. It is a fiesta time where horses and clothes are shown off in the parade through town. It has the combination of the excitement of a horse race and the competitive spirit of a football game. If there is a "spite" race between the owners of two ranches who have had a heated argument over the ability of their respective horses, the excitement and competition is doubled. In communities the rodeo is an attempt to bring some of the spirit of a bygone day back and serves as a time to release tensions. Some of the informality and sentiment of the old outfits are revived. Ranchers kill meat to provide free barbeque and the women cook beans. Of course, at many rodeos, all these patterns are commercialized, especially where

the urban public is being attracted. However, the contestants still give it authenticity of spirit and on the community level it serves as a country fair, a patriotic celebration, or a social occasion.

Branding is still a very useful method of distinguishing ownership, and in many ways it has given to the larger community, state, and region a pattern of great symbolic value. In the state of Texas that these buildings use brands to symbolize continuity with a past of heroic endeavor.¹ Bed spreads, lamps, car doors, and many other

¹E.E. Dale, Cow Country, p. 235.

personal articles continue to be ritualistically decorated by these symbols. The functions of such patterns vary from pure decoration to an extreme of imparting some mystical potency. Such, also, is the function of cowboy boots and western hats. Their utility may be great upon horseback or in the sun of the open range, but it is hard to maintain such rationality in situations where they are worn on hard pavements or in the shade of tall buildings. They symbolize the now almost sacred traditions of "cowboy life." With such a "ten-gallon" hat on one's head and a pair of thirty dollar boots on one's feet one can come near to experiencing the "aristocratic" feeling the cowboy felt on horseback. The term "drugstore cowboy" is a very common one and refers to similar patterns.

Wild west stories and movies have long capitalized on the adventurous and romantic qualities of the early ranching phase. Most of the time in the wild west stories, the "boy gets girl" plot is drafted onto a cattle-country background, ruining the artistic possibilities

of both.² However, they do point to one of the strongest characters

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Douglas Branch, The Cowboy and His Interpreters, p. 230.

in American mythology, the American cowboy. It is upon this mythology that these enterprises are built. The cowboy shows may be said to have a more positive function, in that they use such mythology in presenting a modern "morality" play. The good always wins out. Sex is usually played down. The use of cowboy movie stars in the role of presenting good citizenship is an indication of the effectiveness of this mythology. The cowboy, as the knight of old, has the highest ideals attributed to him by the generations after him. Also sharing in this mythology are the great number of "cowboy" singers. Some of them are authentic in their folk quality, but most of the time their songs are direct from the writers of Tin Pan Alley and are written directly for the growing public of this type of songs. They build into and make use of the folk traditions of the cowboy.

It is relevant to ask the source of the strength of these patterns. The analysis of the structure of the institutional system of the early Texas cattle ranch suggests a possible hypothesis. It was noted that the primary characteristics of this early phase of ranching were those patterns connected with the outfit in which interaction was in terms of basic "value-attitudes." The surface or more specific reaction patterns of the individual were not satisfactory on the frontier, therefore the interaction was in terms of the more general value orientations or canalizations³ which resulted in patterns of charismatic

³Gardiner Murphey, Personality, pp. 161-192.

authority, mishpat justice, and communal group life. The patterns are ones which usually emerge in times of stress or excitement in a common cause, as in a disaster or war. Therefore, to the modern urbanized man, these patterns seem expressive of basic "human nature" and life without complications. The "formal rationality" of the modern contractual system is often in conflict with the more basic "substantive rationality" of the group which thinks in terms similar to these patterns.⁴ This feeling of frustration makes the mishpat justice of

⁴ H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills, From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, pp. 220, 298-9.

the outfit seem ideal. The cowboy is a part of the mythology for the same reason that Robin Hood, pirates and others whose norms may be counter to the official law-norms, are in this mythology. They can be identified with a more basic and uncomplicated sense of right and wrong. Universalistic standards of a rational-legal system are hard to maintain and particularism may seem more just at times. This is made evident by the strength of machines in city government.

Solutions to some earlier problems

The solution to the problem of the frontier was implied in the discussion of the early phase of ranching, but a more explicit presentation must be made. It was shown how the social organization which dominated the ranch frontier was the outfit which stressed the primary social relations of its members. The frontier represents a situation in which the more formal routines are not used. The groups formed depend more upon the basic "value-attitudes" for their actions and

therefore charismatic leadership and mishpat justice are typical frontier patterns. However, on different types of frontiers, different types of primary group relations are stressed and thus make a great deal of difference in the other patterns.⁵

⁵ Cf. James G. Leyburn, Frontier Folkways, pp. 231-233.

On the frontier common to the farming lands, the family comes as an organized unit. Therefore, the important primary group is not formed on the frontier. Thus such settlers bring with them a lot of older patterns formed under more formal situations. The pattern of marriage itself indicates and contributes to a conserving tendency. However, neighborhood groups are formed which have properties of newer groups. On the open range, where it was man interacting with man, the patterns were much more spontaneous and the resulting routinization reached a very different level from the older patterns. Since the individual usually came by himself, his survival was important and personal qualities were stressed. This gave the ranching institution a stamp of individualism. However, this individualism should not be taken as lack of control, which existed in many of the frontier towns and mining camps. The ranching outfit was a more permanent unit and had a large amount of solidarity not found in these other situations. The outfits were more isolated than the mining camps or frontier towns and could develop more easily an esprit de corps without conflicts.⁶ Thus it would seem that the effect of a certain frontier

⁶ Cf. Ibid., p. 6.

upon the normative patterns is dependent upon the type of primary group dominating the interaction on that frontier. If it is a previously organized one as the family is, the older traditions are often carried forward with relatively small change. However, if it is a newer type, such as the outfit of the ranch, the fortuitous interactions of the individuals are organized in terms of less traditional values. If interaction is brief, rushed, or crowded, as in the mining camps and cowtowns, disorganization and lack of social control are the general patterns.

Toynbee's hypothesis that the cattle country would have developed a distinctive nomadic civilization, if the forward movement of the Industrial Revolution had not prevented it, has a somewhat precarious position.⁷ The ranch system was nurtured economically by the markets

⁷ See Arnold Toynbee, A Study of History, Vol. III, p. 21.

of the north and east, socially by the influx of young men from the south, and culturally by the basic values or ethos of the Western culture. It might have become isolated enough to produce a nomadic variation of this ethos. However, with this isolation the basic patterns of the long trail drives would have been impossible. The plantation type of ranching common in South America seems to be a greater possibility.⁸ The early ranches before the advent of trail-driving

⁸ Carl C. Taylor, "Rural Locality Groups in Argentina," American Sociological Review, IX, pp. 162-170.

⁹ were of this type. Toynbee's emphasis on the similarities between the

nomads and the cowboys is important, but he is in a precarious position when he asserts that it was a budding nomadic civilization cut short in its early stages.

Theoretical implications

This study of the Texas cattle ranch has some theoretical implications for the sociological theory of institutions. The significance of these implications is in the consideration of how institutions originate and how they change. The ranch patterns were frontier patterns. Therefore, an analysis of the origins of its patterns and their change is by definition a study of an emerging institution.

An institution in this study has been defined as made up of normative patterns, which direct the reciprocal interactions of the members of a group. These normative patterns have been divided into three different types on the basis of criteria which relate to the needs that the norms serve. Two factors seem to be basic components of all institutions. That is, the institution must have norms regulating social behavior, and these norms must promote some needs or interests of the group. It is the needs or interests which are primary in the origin of an institution. A group must exist with a common interest or interests. On the range, the common interests were the raising and marketing of cattle. In this case, the needs or interests were very explicit. This is not true in all situations. Sometimes the interests remain unexpressed or the existence of the social relation itself is of primary importance.⁹

⁹E. T. Hiller, Social Relations and Structures, p. 263.

The situational patterns of ranching are good examples of patterns that arise around needs that are not consciously expressed. This is especially true of those that emerged around the personal relations of the cattlemen and formed patterns of informal social organization. The actors in this situation were thrown together by necessity. Distance prevented other relations from forming outside of the outfit. Therefore, out of the interaction on this level, there developed patterned expectations which stabilized the behavior of the actors into a system. Of course, the individual actors came into these relationships with backgrounds of broad general assumptions and ideas as to the right kind of action. However, these only expressed general attitudes and not specific behavior. These informal groups, as the analysis of the ranch has indicated, made personal qualities, such as courage and loyalty, ends in themselves.

The instrumental patterns emerged directly from the problems of trying to raise cattle and sell them on the Texas frontier. The needs were explicit and the patterns that emerged solved the problems on a more rational level. However, even here it was found that the situational patterns provided a framework within which the other patterns conformed. The conditions of range life at this early stage were not at the point where close calculation of cost and profits were necessary. The personality needs met by the informal patterns were more pressing.

The change of ranching, as the analysis has indicated, was brought about by conditions of competition which necessitated that the ranch evolve a more rational attitude of economy and practicality. This tendency was increased by the appearance of groups, such as the

family, based upon more stable relationships which could satisfy the functional needs of intimacy and security of the individuals of the cattle country. This made the main functions of the ranch system those of its specific goals of raising and marketing cattle. Thus two types of the institutional emergence are displayed. The situational patterns were of a kind that originate fortuitously without conscious purpose. The instrumental patterns were of a kind where the type of emergence was around explicit purposes. The change from the dominance of the informal group patterns to the contractual system of the modern ranch demonstrated the tendency of an institutional system to develop more explicit norms as it becomes less isolated and comes into competition with other groups and their institutions. It loses those functions around which patterns emerged that hinders the explicit goals of the group.

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